United Nations A/CONF.226/PC.3/13

General Assembly

Distr.: General
3 June 2016

Original: English

Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)
Third session
Surabaya, Indonesia, 25-27 July 2016

Habitat III regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) hereby transmits the outcome document of the Habitat III regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Toluca, Mexico, from 18 to 20 April 2016.

16-09100 (E) 100616

Please recycle

Outcome document of the Habitat III regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean

1. In the city of Toluca, Mexico, we, representatives of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, including national, subnational and local governments, legislators, the academic community and civil society organizations, gather to share the challenges and opportunities for our cities and communities and build from our own realities a regional vision for their future. We assume this responsibility with the conviction that the consolidation of cities and human settlements where people can fully exercise all of their rights and freedoms is an indispensable condition to combat structural lags that harm our countries and cities, such as poverty, insecurity and violence, social and territorial inequality and vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

2. Habitat III is being held at a decisive moment. It is time to assume long-term commitments to materialize the efforts of the international community that resulted from the adoption in 2015 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. Together, these agreements recognize that the prosperity and well-being of humanity depends on our capacity to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, including the way in which we plan, manage and build our cities and human settlements.

3. The Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 11, Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, recognize the relevance of urban and territorial development to improving the well-being of the world's population. Reaching adequate living conditions in cities and human settlements so that they are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable is a goal that is inextricable from that of overcoming the challenges presented by poverty, climate change and the development of energy and infrastructure and an inclusive economy, among other things.

4. The right to the city is considered in some countries as a guiding concept in advocating for a living environment that has the conditions necessary to facilitate the universal and effective exercise of all human rights, economic, social and cultural. When these rights are realized and all actors assume the corresponding commitments and responsibilities, urbanization will effectively generate the development opportunities that humanity has looked for since it started to concentrate in urban agglomerations.

5. For this reason, we reiterate the commitment of the region, which, during the past few years, has been developing solutions (both political and urban) relating to urban development in order to contribute to the process of constructing the New Urban Agenda, which will be adopted in Quito during the Habitat III conference, and we call for the participation of the political leaders of the region in committing to push it forward. Owing to its comprehensiveness and reach, the New Urban Agenda should be structured as a set of commitments that all national and subnational governments and communities should adopt as a road map for the implementation of a new model of sustainable and inclusive urban development. Its

success will depend on the clarity and forcefulness that countries, governments and communities will project onto the agreements that result from Habitat III. It also depends on us being able to put people, their needs and their rights at the centre of the New Urban Agenda.

6. With this conviction, we, the participants of the regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, recognize that it is imperative:

(a) To recognize that urbanization and development are intricately linked and that it is necessary to ensure sustainable growth. Urbanization must be a driving force and a source of development with the power to change and improve living conditions for all;

(b) To highlight the role of cultural diversity and heritage in the rehabilitation and revitalization of urban areas, as a way to strengthen social participation and the exercise of citizenship;

(c) To guarantee that the New Urban Agenda is built with a focus on human rights and gender equality, in which the priority is the equity and sustainability of human settlements as a medium for the full development of all;

(d) To assume that the new model of urban development should integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development to promote equity, well-being and the distribution of common goods and public services to reduce exclusion and sociospatial segregation;

(e) To recover the calling of the city as a meeting place and a space for culture, entertainment and opportunities for the development of people, in which plurality and diversity can be expressed by those who inhabit it, where the free interchange of ideas promotes innovation and development and where heritage plays a significant role in the processes of conservation and urban regeneration;

(f) To ensure that the agreements that countries adopt within the framework of the Habitat III conference achieve full access for all people, women and men, of all ages and from all conditions of human and cultural diversity, to the territory and the city and all of the opportunities that they generate, and guarantee the political, social, economic and cultural participation of all in their construction and development;

(g) To build and adapt cities with a gender perspective that allow and promote the human rights and empowerment of women of all ages in the development, decision-making and enjoyment of the city and its public spaces including the prevention of all types of violence against women and girls in order for them to enjoy a safe and respectful environment, free of violence, and to exercise their rights in a free and full manner to achieve their development and ensure the conditions for economic, occupational, political and social equality;

(h) To adopt agreements that ensure effective integration into the community and access for all, in particular people with disabilities, to the cities, physical environment, transportation, information and communications including information and communications systems and technologies and other services and installations open to the public or for public use in both urban and rural areas.

7. We propose the following key elements to be included in the New Urban Agenda.

Urban and territorial planning

8. The New Urban Agenda should:

(a) Incorporate into development planning schemes a focus on the integral and sustainable management of territory, promoting the equitable growth of regions and reinforcing links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas, with the goal of establishing productive and harmonious relationships between the different areas. This will enable advancement towards competitive cities, allowing for productive transformation, resilience and the reduction of risk, food security, the sustainable management of land and migratory patterns that are not determined by factors of expulsion only;

(b) Foster the development of an urban economy that must translate into benefits for all people, improving their quality of life. Urban development expenses are investments in the well-being of the population;

(c) Promote inclusive economies that ensure decent and sustainable ways of life and work for all people, taking into consideration the existence of other economic schemes, such as solidarity economies using financial support mechanisms and informal, social and circular economies that especially recognize the role of women in them, thereby valuing, reducing and redistributing unpaid domestic work;

(d) Promote national planning schemes that include a vision of a system of cities that recognizes both the functional relationships and the economic, urban, environmental, technological and social dependence existing between the municipal nucleus and other human settlements;

(e) Promote the development of intermediate cities as service centres for rural areas and as the first link in generating value in production chains, which originate in the rural environment, recognizing the contributions that they bring to indigenous communities in the provision of ecosystem services;

(f) Prioritize urban regeneration, repurposing and rehabilitation over extensive models and the occupation of new territory. The proposed model should be implemented by avoiding processes of gentrification and expulsion of the low-income population from the city centre to the periphery;

(g) Incorporate and promote local cultural values, avoiding the importation of integral planning models based on cultural models, social environments or economic frameworks foreign to the territory to be planned, and promote planning models that incorporate a gender perspective.

Urban governance

9. The New Urban Agenda should:

(a) Improve joint and multilevel urban governance in all spheres and at all scales of cities: networks and systems of cities, megacities, metropolises and intermediate and small cities, including their relation to all rural sectors, by promoting the development of mechanisms and legal frameworks that guarantee collaboration and coordination between municipalities and between different levels of government. Additionally, the New Urban Agenda should promote adequate and balanced processes of administrative and financial decentralization that are

accompanied by processes to strengthen the technical, administrative and financial capacities of local governments;

(b) Innovate within metropolitan management through adequate planning, governance, partnership and financing mechanisms in order to guarantee the quality, efficiency and affordability of goods and services demanded by the inhabitants of urban areas, ensuring adequate coordination with national Governments.

Adequate housing

10. The New Urban Agenda should:

(a) Ensure, within a human rights framework, housing schemes that are inclusive and integrated in sustainable urbanization strategies that facilitate access to housing and basic services that are adequate, safe and affordable for all people and to improve informal settlements. To do this, it will be necessary to strengthen programmes and institutions that have been successful in tackling the qualitative and quantitative housing shortage while innovating strategies to cater to groups that have lagged behind the most. These include women, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, the population involved in the informal economy and those who live in informal settlements, in areas prone to risks or in sprawling rural communities, among others. Such innovations should include a logic based on the proximity of services, adequate financing schemes, technical and financial assistance for those who build their own housing and the development of new markets, such as those for renting, renting with the option of buying and the exchange of existing housing, providing different forms of tenure and guaranteeing the security thereof;

(b) Recognize that reducing the housing shortage should include the structuring of a comprehensive land policy that takes into account the use of urbanized land, especially empty urban spaces, the orderly and progressive creation of new neighbourhoods on land adequate for urban expansion and the building of housing in rural areas in patterns that are appropriate to the surrounding environment;

(c) Recognize that urban informality is a result of dysfunctional land markets and urban policies, and strengthen programmes of urbanization and integration of informal settlements. These programmes should include, as the case may be, access to basic services, good quality public spaces, community services, such as regularization measures for the property of land, and the promotion of security of tenure, as well as the establishment of methods and strategies for the prevention and mediation of conflicts.

Water and sanitation

11. The New Urban Agenda should:

(a) Develop the infrastructure necessary for the provision of water, sewage systems, the cleaning of public areas, solid waste management, urban drainage and storm water management to guarantee universal and equitable access to potable water and adequate sanitary and hygiene services;

16-09100

(b) Ensure that such infrastructure forms part of plans and projects that are articulated and integrated, including interventions in terms of housing and mobility, among others, and involves the participation of the local population.

Sustainable mobility

12. The New Urban Agenda should:

(a) Accelerate cities' transition towards inclusive and equitable models of sustainable mobility that respond to people's different accessibility needs, while recognizing the mobility requirements of women and men, and that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in cities. Such a transition will have to be reflected in the priorities of investments in infrastructure in measures to guarantee road safety and reduce deaths and serious injuries caused by road accidents. More importantly, it should reflect an adequate provision and distribution of public space with a vision to maintain, within the modal share, greater use of public transport and non-motorized means of transportation, which combats sedentary lifestyles and prevents non-communicable diseases in cities;

(b) Integrate processes of urban and transportation planning in order to drastically reduce the number, distance, time and cost of trips taken by the inhabitants. The strategies proposed include a model for transport-oriented development, the revision of housing densities, the promotion of mixed-use developments, changes to regulations in city parking provision and a model of polycentric development tied to greater flexibility in the housing market;

(c) Adopt financing strategies for public transportation systems that guarantee their viability and that promote their economic sustainability to allow affordable access for all people to the services.

Land management

13. The New Urban Agenda should:

(a) Promote the social and ecological function of land, while considering food security and nutrition, in order to promote fair cities through policies that distribute the burdens and benefits of urbanization fairly and avoid the processes of segregation. To do this, it will be necessary to regulate land markets to ensure the capture and distribution of the value created as a result of the processes of urbanization, starting with fiscal, urban planning and urban management tools, and to avoid speculative practices. The New Urban Agenda should also innovate instruments that allow for the planning of organized urban growth, minimizing the prevalence of intra-urban voids and consolidating optimal densities within cities. In this regard, cooperation in the design, financing and implementation of state-of-the-art urban indicator systems and geographical information systems will be essential;

(b) Create and recover good quality public spaces that are accessible and safe and that facilitate social cohesion, interaction between generations and livelihood opportunities, including in peripheral areas. In the same way, the New Urban Agenda should strengthen strategies for the conservation and preservation of heritage and landscape and should expand accessibility and improve connectivity in cities through the removal of all types of barriers.

Environment, climate change and resilience

14. The New Urban Agenda should:

(a) Reduce significantly the impact that cities have on climate change through the promotion of consumption and production patterns that are sustainable, including management patterns for land, waste, water, sanitation, air pollution, the generation and use of clean and renewable energies, green areas, infrastructure and sustainable housing; efficient energy programmes; and the general sustainable management of natural resources that the city consumes, as well as the restoration of degraded ecosystems;

(b) Increase preventive and reactive measures to boost resilience in cities, in other words, the capacity of cities to recover after extreme events in the least amount of time possible, minimizing human, environmental and economic losses through the reduction and management of the risks of disasters;

(c) Prevent and reduce the exposure to risk of people located in informal settlements through, inter alia, in situ interventions and planned relocations of people depending on the specific circumstances;

(d) Integrate disaster risk management into the use and occupation of territory, allowing for the planning of territorial development to integrate into its economic, social and biophysical components holistic actions to prevent the conditions for future risks and mitigate present risks;

(e) Develop and apply mitigation and adaptation strategies for climate change that serve to prevent and reduce new conditions of vulnerability to disasters associated with the occurrence of the phenomena of climate variability and/or climate change.

15. For sustainable development in the region, it is essential that a new generation of national urban policies be built on the basis of a new paradigm of urbanization that promotes accessibility, adequate housing, equity, security, mobility and cultural identity.

16. We identify the following as key elements for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda:

(a) At the national and local level:

(i) To develop innovative models of multilevel governance in which different levels of government participate in territorial development in a coordinated and jointly responsible manner, establishing long-term commitments, when possible, and to promote national urban policies and the revision of existing legislation that allows subnational and local governments to plan and manage cities and urban areas and urban-rural linkages in a sustainable and participatory manner that is aligned and articulated with national development strategies;

(ii) To promote institutional solidity, professionalism, transparency and accountability in urban management on the basis of the efficient use of and access to available information, and to assume urban development as a social and a political commitment, the implementation of which demands the allocation of sufficient and timely resources appropriate for achieving a long-term transformation;

16-09100

(iii) To recognize that urban development, land use, sustainability and housing are the responsibility of different levels of government, including intermediate levels between the national and local authorities;

(iv) To establish spaces that are effective for citizens to participate in the development of their cities and settlements as a tool and an opportunity to foster good governance, social cohesion and democratic consolidation. These spaces for participation must be accompanied by processes of empowerment and joint responsibility of citizens and promoted in the planning, execution and monitoring of works and projects that have an impact on the sustainable development of the city. It is therefore essential to have a space for dialogue, joint development and joint monitoring between national Governments, subnational governments and representatives of civil society and the private sector, which also guarantees the commitment and sustainability of the process;

(v) To promote subnational financing mechanisms on the basis of strengthening revenue collection mechanisms in cities, including property taxes, and by capturing the value of urban land, and public-private partnerships, among others, to complement the transfer of national public resources. These measures should contribute to improving the living conditions of all people, especially those who lack access to urban infrastructure and services, and promote tools and mechanisms of local economic development stemming from the endogenous resources of cities and territories;

(vi) To use information technology and communications for the service of the population and public decision-making to increase the quality and relevance of territorial planning and efficiency in the delivery of urban services, allow the sustainable management of natural resources and facilitate monitoring, evaluation and accountability through citizen observatories, and to promote the generation and availability of information, data and indicators disaggregated by sex, age and territory, among other things;

(vii) To change the prevailing paradigms on the use and the way in which we relate with one another in the public space, as well as a new culture of sustainable production and consumption of goods, services and urban amenities in which national, subnational and local governments, the academic community and the education system, the media and social organizations play a decisive role;

(b) At the international level:

(i) To strengthen the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) by endowing it with the appropriate resources and establishing adequate working arrangements for it to continue to be the leading authority in the field of sustainable urban development within the United Nations system, and to call upon the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to work efficiently and in a coherent and coordinated manner in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially with regard to issues that include sustainable urban development and housing;

(ii) To expand the opportunities for international cooperation, including North-South, South-South, triangular and decentralized cooperation, and to

mobilize financial resources from all sources to contribute to the implementation of the agreements that are adopted at the Habitat III conference;

(iii) To encourage the participation of civil society, local authorities, parliamentarians, the private sector, the scientific community, academia, philanthropies and foundations, and volunteers in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda through partnerships between the different stakeholders to mobilize and share resources, knowledge, experience and technology, complementing the efforts of governments.

Monitoring and review

17. We consider:

(a) That a monitoring mechanism for the Habitat III conference will be indispensable to assess progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda and to identify the challenges and gaps in relation to urban development that require international cooperation, including the mobilization of financial resources;

(b) That the monitoring system should generate inputs in terms of sustainable urban development that fuel the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, which will monitor and review the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, we propose to consider the creation of regional monitoring mechanisms;

(c) That the monitoring system should promote the development and strengthening of the capacities of developing countries to implement the New Urban Agenda, including the mobilization of adequate means of implementation.

18. We commit ourselves and agree to promote this declaration as an input to the New Urban Agenda and for the agreements that are adopted during the Habitat III conference, and we commit to using its considerations and proposals as guiding elements for the inclusive and sustainable planning and management of our cities and human settlements in the coming decades.

19. We gratefully acknowledge the hospitality of the Government of Mexico, the State of Mexico and the city of Toluca, and we recognize the work done to ensure the success of the Habitat III regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean.

16-09100